

REMARKS

Status of Claims

Claims 1, 3-4 and 6-7 are pending, of which claim 1 is independent.

Claims 1 and 3-4 have been amended to correct informalities in the claim language and to more clearly define the claimed subject matter. Support for the amendment is found, for example, at page 4, lines 8-20 of the specification. No new matter has been entered.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 3-4 and 6-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsukada et al. (USP 5,800,636) or Takemoto et al. (JP 2004-172469) in view of Hatauchi et al. (JP 2001-189211) and Lashmore et al. (USP 6,251,514). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

First, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references disclose iron particles consisting of elemental iron and iron oxide as recited by amended claim 1. The iron powder particles of Tsukada contains Si (0.03-0.1%) and Ti (see, Abstract of Tsukada). The powder of Takemoto is Fe-Si-Al, Fe-Si, Fe-Al, or Fe-Ni alloys (see, paragraph [0019]-[0020] of Takemoto). The dust core of Hatauchi contains Al (1-10%), Ca and other elements (see, Abstract of Hatauchi). Further, the ferromagnetic powder of Lashmore is iron and iron alloys such as Fe-Si, Fe-Al, Fe-Si-Al, Fe-Ni, Fe-Co and Fe-Co-Ni (see, col. 5, lines 8-13 of Lashmore). Although Lashmore appears to disclose iron oxide (FeO, Fe₃O₄, etc), the iron oxide is used as a coating material together with FePO₄, FeCrO₄, etc (see, col. 5, lines 50-67 of Lashmore). It is noted that although claim 1 uses the language “consisting of,” the iron particles of claim 1 may contain impurities arising from manufacturing process. However, in the cited references, the

elements other than element iron and iron oxide are contained more than impurity level (percent order).

Further, although Hatauchi appears to teach an iron dust core with a coercive force of less than 80 A/m, the material of Hatauchi is an iron alloy containing Al, Ca or other elements.

Although an oxygen concentration of Takemoto appears to be 0.01-0.15 mass %, the material of Takemoto is also an alloy as discussed above.

As such, it is clear that none of the cited references, taken alone or in any combination thereof, renders claims 1, 3-4 and 6 obvious. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 3-4 and 6.

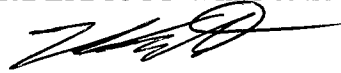
CONCLUSION

It is believed that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request an early and favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application. If there are any outstanding issues which might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' representative at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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